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## ABSTRACT

University Counseling Center clientele in 49 universities were surveyed by the use of the Counseling Services Assessment Blank. Respondents provided demographic and diagnostic self descriptions, self report assessments of specific therapeutic gains, and evaluations of agency services. The diagnostic self descriptions were based on a two-dimensional system. The first dimension involved the client's ranking of his or her problem-goals in counseling as either vocational, personal, or educational. The second dimension involved a ranking of the possible causes of the problems as either lack of information about self, lack of information about the environment, self conflict, conflict with others, or lack of skill. The five gain items corresponded directly to the five cause items so that, for example, the first gain item asked for the client's evaluation of gain in information about self. There were also 11 service evaluation items concerning helpfulness of tests, confidentiality of counselors and groups, ratings of individual, group, and overall counseling experiences along with helpfulness ratings of individual and group counselors and other group members. Other items assessed were physical facilities and the client's perception of adequacy of self for seeking counseling. In the analysis of sex differences, it was found that: (1) females sought more counseling than males; (2) females saw themselves with more problems and engaged in longer therapy periods; and (3) both sexes increased focus equally on themselves each successive academic year, with females beginning with a higher focus in the freshman year. (Author/HLM)

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Some Female and Male Differences found in a  
Self Report Inventory and Validity of Self Report

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University Counseling Center clientele in 49 universities were surveyed from 1968 through 1974 by the use of the Counseling Services Assessment Blank. Respondents (13,962) provided demographic and diagnostic self descriptions, self report assessments of specific therapeutic gains, and evaluations of agency services. The diagnostic self descriptions were based on a two dimensional system, taken from the Missouri Diagnostic Classification Plan. The first dimension involved the client's ranking of his or her problem-goals in counseling with the problem-goal items to be ranked being; (1) vocational, (2) personal, and (3) educational. The second dimension involved a ranking of the possible causes of the problem. The causes to be ranked were (1) lack of information about self, (2) lack of information about the environment, (3) self conflict, and (4) conflict with others, and (5) lack of skill. The five gain items corresponded directly to the five cause items so that, for example, the first gain item asked for the client's evaluation of gain in information about self. Finally, there were eleven service evaluation items concerning helpfulness of tests, confidentiality of counselors and groups, ratings of individual and group and overall counseling experiences along with ratings of helpfulness of individual and group counselors, and other group members. One item assessed physical facilities and one questioned the client's perception of adequacy of self for seeking counseling (see attached survey).

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Many areas were investigated but of relevance to this paper, data were analyzed in order to determine the number of sessions for sex by diagnostic groups and, the relative importance of the 15 diagnostic categories to academic class by sex groups. The relative importance of the causes to the three problem-goal (vocational, personal, educational) areas was analyzed along with the extent of specific gains within each primary problem-goal category and within each primary cause category. Diagnostic dimensions by sex categories were analyzed for differences on specific gain and service evaluation items. Finally, correlations among gain and service evaluation items were presented within each problem-goal by sex group.

Where female-male differences were concerned we found that:

1. Females sought counseling at a rate which was 28.1% higher than their overall student body proportions and males sought counseling at a rate which was 19.2% lower than their student body proportions. Females also saw themselves as having more personal problems and took part in longer term therapy than did males. These findings were thought to reflect a greater female receptiveness to counseling and greater female need for counseling due to traditionally inferior feminine roles unfavorable to human development (see Table 1).
2. The Freshman year was time of vocational focus. Both males and females increased focus in the personal dimension by approximately 10% with each passing academic year. However, since females began the Freshman year with greater focus in the personal area than males, male diagnostic proportions most resembled the female proportions of each preceding year (See Figure 1 & Table 2).

3. Among all gain and satisfaction items only on the item concerning test helpfulness did male diagnostic groups more often give higher ratings than female diagnostic groups (see Table 3).
4. Respondents who failed to give sexual identification were seen in a mean number of sessions which well exceeded (by approximately six times in the educational and vocational dimensions) the mean number of sessions for identified male and female groups (see Table 4 & 5).
5. Males were found to respond in high percentages to lack of information about self and lack of information about the environment in the Freshman and Senior years while no causes were unusually high for females in those years. These findings were thought to indicate a male sensitivity to the changing environment and female maintenance of security through more immediate involvement in internal development and interpersonal relationships (see Table 6).

Where validity of self report was concerned we found that:

1. Students provided rankings of possible causes for their problem areas (vocational, personal or educational) which seemed to fit a theoretical notion of those problem-goal dimensions (see Table 7). That is, client rankings showed the most important causes of vocational problems to be lack of self information and self conflict, while the most important cause of personal problems was clearly self conflict. Rankings revealed that the most important causes of educational problems were lack of environmental information and lack of skill. Thus, clients clearly discriminated causes for their problems dependent upon the type of problem and that discrimination, overall, fits the theoretical notion of the makeup of those problems.

2. Among service evaluation items, the items concerning overall counseling experience and overall individual counseling experience ranked fifth and sixth among the 11 items (see Table 8). In addition, the mean ratings was 3.85 while the OIC and OC ratings were 3.87 and 3.89 respectively. Thus, the overall counseling item ratings, on the average differed no more than .04 from the mean of the mean service evaluation ratings within a range of 1.53. Thus, apparently the respondent's internal subjective process, in which the relative helpfulness of each item was weighed or compared, was quite accurate.

3. Though in each cause dimension the highest response rate was found for that cause dimension's corresponding gain category, the actual gain item rating was relatively independent of cause category (See Table 9). That is, when self conflict, conflict with others and lack of skill were the primary causes of problems, the corresponding gains received the highest number of responses but not the highest ratings. Rather, gain in self information still received the highest overall rating in each of those cause dimensions (note the exceedingly high response to the SC-RSC combination). Gain in environmental information and gain in self information received the highest ratings within their corresponding cause dimensions (see following discussion of these items). Thus, students appeared to attend to the gain items which related to the causes of their problems but provided evaluations based on other subjective factors, uninfluenced by that relationship.

4. When gain items were correlated among themselves, root mean square correlations revealed that across dimensions (vocational, personal and educational), resolution of conflict with self and resolution of conflict with others were most highly related to all other gains while gain in environmental information and remedy of lack of skill were least related to other gains. Thus, remedy

of self conflict and conflict with others were found to be more centrally related to the remaining gains than the remaining gains were among themselves (see Table 10). Since most theories of counseling emphasize the centrality of their emotional self, the self system and social interactions to success in counseling, and, since some type of client falsification of response which could lead to these finding is nearly impossible here (more is to be said in support of this latter notion in the following), the validity of self report would appear to be supported by these findings.

Further evidence for client veracity in the report of the above gains was provided by the finding that gains in specific area, maintained their position of centrality in their relationships to other gains regardless of the cause of the problem and regardless of the problem-goal dimension (see Table 11, 12, & 13). The number of persons giving a cause dimension a ranking of "1" had little to do with the magnitude of the relationship of gains in that dimension to gains in other dimensions. For example, relatively few vocational clients viewed conflict with others as a primary cause of their problem but resolution of conflict with others in the vocational dimension was overall more highly related to all other gains than were those other gains to one another (see Table 11). At the same time, lack of skill was viewed as a primary cause of educational problems more often than any other cause but remedy of lack of skill was less related to other gains than any other gain in the educational dimension. Thus, even the self reported causes of client problems did not interfere with the central position reported for gains in the social-emotional areas.

5. Among service evaluation items, the highest rating was given to the respondent's perception of counselor confidentiality ( $\bar{X}$  = 4.79) while the

lowest was given to the item concerning the helpfulness of group members ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.26) (see Table 8). The range for means of 1.53 on a scale of 5, indicates first of all, that respondents were clearly differentiating among items, and secondly, the particular content of the lowest rated item would seem to match with logical expectations (the highest rating for counselor confidentiality is probably accurate, but is more or less a client anticipation and difficult to corroborate here).

Though remedies may be sought for the lowest rating, we still would logically expect that clients would receive more help in their interactions with the counselor than in their interactions with other group members. At least we suppose the counselor has been trained for some years to be helpful while group members usually have had little or no such training.

6. Standard deviations on gain items were all above 1.0, on a 5.0 scale, which indicated that a fairly sizable number of clients gave negative as well as positive ratings (see Table 14). When the gain item means are also taken into account, it is obvious that clients in the main, did not feel compelled to give glowing accounts of the effectiveness of therapy!

7. The two highest gain item means were for the self information and environmental information items which suggested, as one might imagine, that it may be less difficult for the therapist to impart information, perhaps in the form of test results, than to unravel the complexities involved in self conflict or to effect the resolution of conflict with others (the second to lowest mean). Also from the client's point of view, it would seem easier to integrate information than to resolve conflicts or remedy lack of skill (see Table 14).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Cause Items

Gain Items

Self Conflict (SC)

Resolution of Self Conflict (ASC)

Lack of Information about Self (LIS)

Gain in Information about Self (GIS)

Lack of Information about the Environment (LIE)

Gain in Information about the Environment (GIE)

Conflict with Others (CO)

Resolution of Conflict with Others (CO)

Lack of Skill (LS)

Remedy of Lack of Skill (LS)

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SERVICE EVALUATION ITEMS

Helpfulness of Tests (HT)

Helpfulness of Group Counselor (HGC)

Confidentiality of Counselor (Conf C)

Helpfulness of Group Members (HGM)

Confidentiality of Group Members (Conf GM)

Adequacy of Physical Facilities (APF)

Overall Individual Counseling Experience (OIC)

Adequacy of Self for Seeking Counseling (SA)

Overall Group Counseling Experience (OGC)

Overall Counseling Experience (OC)

Helpfulness of Individual Counselor (HIC)



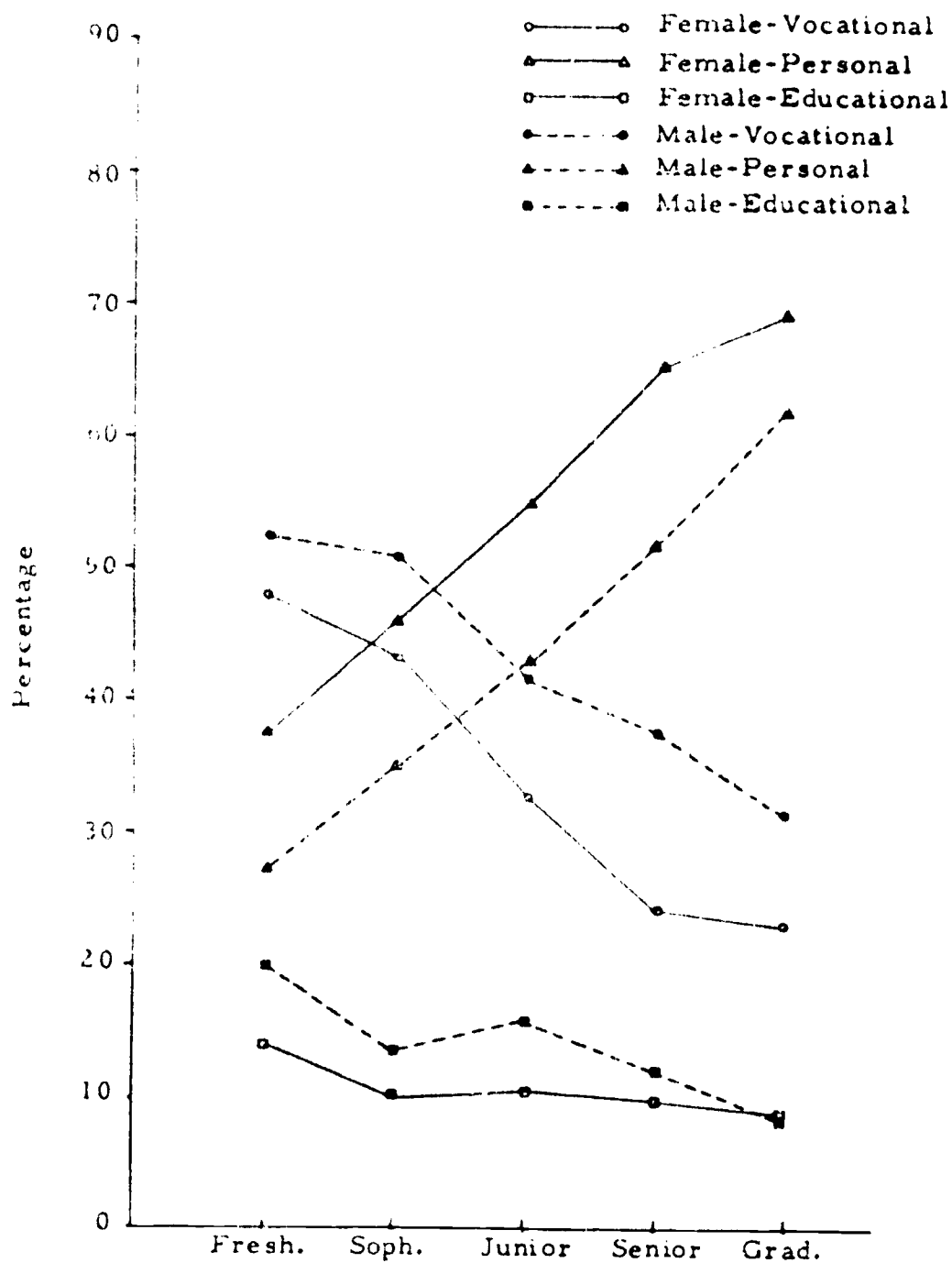


Figure 1. Percent of females and percent of males found across problem-goals within each academic class.

Table 1. Demographic and Diagnostic Data Summary

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <u>Age:</u> Mode=19<br>Mean=21.49<br>SD=4.83   | <u>Sex:</u> Overall Student Body Proportion= 40.6 Female<br>59.4 Male                           |
| Clientele= 52% female (28.1% higher female utilization)<br>48% male (19.2% lower male utilization)   |   |
| <u>Marital Status:</u> Single: 84.0%<br>Married: 12.5%<br>Divorced: 2.5%<br>Separated: .9%<br>Widowed: .2%   | <u>Year:</u> Fresh: 26.8%<br>Soph: 25.5%<br>Jr: 20.3%<br>Sr: 16.5%<br>Grad: 7.6%<br>Other: 3.4% |
| <u>Number of Sessions:</u> $\bar{x}$ individual=4.19<br>$\bar{x}$ Group=7.76   | Total Number of Sessions: Male=43.3%<br>Female=56.7%  |
| <u>Problem:</u> Voc.=40.3% Primary concern in Voc. dimension: F=46.9%<br>M=53.1%<br>Pers.=43.8% Primary concern in Pers. dimension: F=58.0%<br>M=42.0%<br>Ed.=12.8% Primary concern in Ed. dimension: F=44.8%<br>M=55.2% |   |
| <u>Cause</u> SC <sup>a</sup> =40.8% ranking of "1"<br>LIS=19.9% " " " "<br>LIE=17.9% " " " "<br>CO=11.9% " " " "<br>LS=6.0% " " " "  |   |
| <u>Diagnostic Dimensions:</u> Pers. - SC=25.6%<br>Voc. - LIS=13.1%<br>Voc. - LIE=11.5%<br>Per. - CO=10.2%  |   |

<sup>a</sup> Abbreviations are assigned on page 6

Table 2 . Percent of Clients Found Across Problem-Goals Within Each Academic Class.

|                | Freshman |     | Sophomore |     | Junior |     | Senior |     | Graduate |     |
|----------------|----------|-----|-----------|-----|--------|-----|--------|-----|----------|-----|
|                | %        | n   | %         | n   | %      | n   | %      | n   | %        | n   |
| <u>Females</u> |          |     |           |     |        |     |        |     |          |     |
| Vocational     | 47.8     | 800 | 43.2      | 823 | 33.4   | 481 | 24.7   | 280 | 21.7     | 117 |
| Personal       | 37.6     | 628 | 46.4      | 884 | 55.9   | 806 | 65.7   | 746 | 69.4     | 374 |
| Educational    | 14.6     | 244 | 10.5      | 200 | 10.8   | 155 | 9.7    | 110 | 8.9      | 48  |
| <u>Males</u>   |          |     |           |     |        |     |        |     |          |     |
| Vocational     | 52.5     | 938 | 50.6      | 760 | 41.5   | 555 | 37.4   | 421 | 30.7     | 153 |
| Personal       | 27.6     | 493 | 36.1      | 547 | 42.8   | 573 | 51.3   | 577 | 61.1     | 305 |
| Educational    | 19.9     | 355 | 13.3      | 200 | 15.8   | 211 | 11.3   | 127 | 8.2      | 41  |

Table 3. Differences Between Females and Males on Each Gain and Service Evaluation Item.

|  | Comparisons<br>(n) | Frequency Count of<br>Higher Mean of Pair |      |      |
|--|--------------------|---|------|------|
|  |                    | Female                                    | Male | Tied |
| <u>Gains</u>                                     |                    |   |      |      |
| Gained Self Information (GIS)                    | 15                 | 11  | 4    | 0    |
| Gained Environmental<br>Information (GIE)        | 15                 | 14  | 1    | 0    |
| Resolved Self Conflict (RSC)                     | 15                 | 12  | 3    | 0    |
| Resolved Conflict with Others<br>(RCO)           | 15                 | 14  | 1    | 0    |
| Remedied Lack of Skill (RLS)                     | 15                 | 14  | 0    | 1    |
| <u>Service Evaluations</u>                       |                    |   |      |      |
| Helpfulness of Tests (HT)                        | 15                 | 4   | 11   | 0    |
| Confidentiality of Counselor<br>(Conf C)         | 15                 | 15  | 0    | 0    |
| Confidentiality of Group<br>Members (Conf GM)    | 15                 | 8   | 7    | 0    |
| Overall Individual Counseling<br>Experience (OI) | 15                 | 11  | 4    | 0    |
| Overall Group Counseling<br>Experience (OG)      | 15                 | 10  | 5    | 0    |
| Helpfulness of Individual<br>Counselor (HIC)     | 15                 | 12  | 3    | 0    |
| Helpfulness of Group<br>Counselor (HGC)          | 15                 | 8   | 6    | 1    |
| Helpfulness of Group Members<br>(HGM)            | 15                 | 13  | 2    | 0    |
| Adequacy of Physical Facilities<br>(APF)         | 15                 | 15  | 0    | 0    |
| Self Adequacy for Seeking<br>Counseling (SA)     | 15                 | 14  | 1    | 0    |
| Overall Counseling Experience<br>(OC)            | 15                 | 12  | 3    | 0    |

Table 4. Mean Number of Individual Sessions Within Problem-Goal by Sex Groups.

| Sex         | Problem-Goal Dimensions |          |             |           | Total<br>Number of<br>Sessions |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------|-------------|-----------|--------------------------------|
|             | Vocational              | Personal | Educational | Collapsed |                                |
| Male        | Mean                    | 6.056    | 2.931       | 3.895     | 23,993                         |
|             | SD                      | 6.692    | 3.801       | 5.085     | 40.7%                          |
|             | n                       | 2338     | 919         | 6160      |                                |
| Female      | Mean                    | 6.820    | 3.030       | 4.737     | 31,458                         |
|             | SD                      | 7.501    | 3.982       | 6.149     | 53.4%                          |
|             | n                       | 3312     | 694         | 6641      |                                |
| No Response | Mean                    | 14.038   | 18.412      | 17.069    | 3,448                          |
|             | SD                      | 8.739    | 10.205      | 8.162     | 5.9%                           |
|             | n                       | 22       | 17          | 202       | 58,899                         |

\* This column also includes persons who did not categorize themselves within a problem-goal area.

Table 5. Mean Number of Group Sessions Within Problem-Goal by Sex Groups.

| Sex         | Problem-Goal Dimensions |          |             |                        | Total<br>Number of<br>Sessions |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------|-------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
|             | Vocational              | Personal | Educational | Collapsed <sup>*</sup> |                                |
| Male        | Mean                    | 7.992    | 6.063       | 6.182                  | 7,153<br>33.7%                 |
|             | SD                      | 7.508    | 6.770       | 7.138                  |                                |
|             | n                       | 589      | 158         | 1157                   |                                |
| Female      | Mean                    | 8.932    | 7.890       | 7.830                  | 9,373<br>44.1%                 |
|             | SD                      | 8.156    | 7.198       | 7.892                  |                                |
|             | n                       | 724      | 155         | 1197                   |                                |
| No Response | Mean                    | 20.261   | 24.000      | 23.658                 | 4,708<br>22.2%                 |
|             | SD                      | 10.872   | 9.345       | 10.253                 |                                |
|             | n                       | 23       | 16          | 199                    |                                |
|             |                         |          |             |                        | 21,234                         |

\* This column also includes persons who did not categorize themselves within a problem-goal area.

Table 6 . Sex Differences Within Cause Categories by Academic Class.

|           | LIS            | LIE            | SC             | CO             | LS             |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Freshman  | 60.4%<br>n=501 | 51.8%<br>n=409 | 48.2%<br>n=618 | 39.0%<br>n=113 | 54.1%<br>n=145 |
|           | 39.6%<br>n=328 | 48.2%<br>n=380 | 51.8%<br>n=664 | 61.0%<br>n=177 | 45.9%<br>n=123 |
| Sophomore | 51.6%<br>n=368 | 43.1%<br>n=254 | 42.8%<br>n=651 | 32.4%<br>n=126 | 52.6%<br>n=103 |
|           | 48.4%<br>n=345 | 56.9%<br>n=335 | 57.2%<br>n=871 | 67.6%<br>n=263 | 47.4%<br>n=93  |
| Junior    | 56.9%<br>n=301 | 51.4%<br>n=258 | 45.8%<br>n=555 | 34.0%<br>n=124 | 58.0%<br>n=101 |
|           | 43.1%<br>n=228 | 48.6%<br>n=244 | 54.2%<br>n=656 | 66.0%<br>n=241 | 42.0%<br>n=73  |
| Senior    | 64.4%<br>n=237 | 73.4%<br>n=484 | 45.0%<br>n=451 | 35.3%<br>n=123 | 57.8%<br>n=74  |
|           | 35.6%<br>n=131 | 26.6%<br>n=175 | 55.0%<br>n=551 | 64.7%<br>n=225 | 42.2%<br>n=54  |
| Graduate  | 59.8%<br>n=104 | 56.2%<br>n=68  | 42.7%<br>n=210 | 47.6%<br>n=89  | 43.8%<br>n=28  |
|           | 40.2%<br>n=70  | 43.8%<br>n=53  | 57.3%<br>n=282 | 52.4%<br>n=98  | 56.3%<br>n=36  |

Note: Male percentages and n are found in the upper diagonal of each cell; female percentages and n in the lower diagonal.

<sup>a</sup> Male and female response to this cause category differed dependent upon the problem-goal classification. When the problem-goal was vocational or personal, an average 52.5% females and 47.5% males responded to lack of environmental information as a primary cause. When the problem-goal was educational, only 38.0% of females responded to lack of environmental information as a primary cause.

<sup>b</sup> Male and female response to these cause categories differed dependent upon the problem-goal classification. When the problem-goal was personal, an average 58.7% females and 41.3% males responded to self conflict as a primary cause, and 67.3% females and 32.7% males responded to conflict with others as a primary cause. Otherwise, when the problem-goal was educational or vocational male and female response differed little to either of these causes (see and compare male and female n's in the SC and CO by vocational and educational categories in Tables 23 and 24 for specific male and female differences).

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**Note:** Responses (n) within each row are approximately equal due to assignment of rank to blanks.

# Lower means represent greater importance in ranking.



Table 8 Means and Standard Deviations for Evaluation of Services Ratings.

| Service Evaluation Items                          | $\bar{X}$ | S.D. | Response |
|---|-----------|------|----------|
| Helpfulness of Tests (HT)                         | 3.52      | 1.22 | 7,710    |
| Confidentiality of Counselor (Conf C)             | 4.79      | .56  | 13,334   |
| Confidentiality of Group Members<br>(Conf GM)     | 3.96      | 1.11 | 2,523    |
| Overall Individual Counseling Experience<br>(OIC) | 3.87      | 1.09 | 12,892   |
| Overall Group Counseling Experience<br>(OGC)      | 3.48      | 1.16 | 2,611    |
| Helpfulness of Individual Counseling (HIC)        | 4.14      | 1.09 | 12,780   |
| Helpfulness of Group Counselors (HGC)             | 3.80      | 1.20 | 2,354    |
| Helpfulness of Group Members (HGM)                | 3.26      | 1.27 | 2,324    |
| Adequacy of Physical Facilities (APF)             | 4.00      | 1.02 | 13,188   |
| Adequacy of Self for Seeking Counseling<br>(SA)   | 3.64      | 1.10 | 12,906   |
| Overall Counseling Experience (OC)                | 3.89      | 1.02 | 13,321   |

Table A Means and Standard Deviations of Gain Ratings Within Cause Categories.

| Cause                             | Gain in Self Information |      |      |  | Gain in Environmental Information |      |      |  | Resolution of Self Conflict |      |      |  | Resolution of Conflict With Others |      |      |  | Remedy of Lack of Skill |      |      |  | Overall |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|------|------|--|-----------------------------------|------|------|--|-----------------------------|------|------|--|------------------------------------|------|------|--|-------------------------|------|------|--|---------|
|                                   | $\bar{X}$                | SD   | n    |  | $\bar{X}$                         | SD   | n    |  | $\bar{X}$                   | SD   | n    |  | $\bar{X}$                          | SD   | n    |  | $\bar{X}$               | SD   | n    |  |         |
| Lack of Self Information          | 3.72                     | 1.10 | 2698 |  | 3.20                              | 1.16 | 2276 |  | 3.09                        | 1.25 | 2174 |  | 2.86                               | 1.25 | 1267 |  | 2.61                    | 1.27 | 935  |  | 3.22    |
| Lack of Environmental Information | 3.27                     | 1.21 | 1775 |  | 3.06                              | 1.20 | 2407 |  | 3.04                        | 1.23 | 1476 |  | 2.81                               | 1.27 | 829  |  | 2.65                    | 1.32 | 638  |  | 3.25    |
| Self Conflict                     | 3.61                     | 1.15 | 5554 |  | 3.20                              | 1.16 | 4337 |  | 3.36                        | 1.30 | 5504 |  | 3.17                               | 1.23 | 3951 |  | 2.65                    | 1.23 | 2154 |  | 3.25    |
| Conflict With Others              | 3.57                     | 1.16 | 1433 |  | 3.33                              | 1.26 | 1174 |  | 3.51                        | 1.27 | 1541 |  | 3.41                               | 1.31 | 1546 |  | 2.84                    | 1.33 | 566  |  | 3.40    |
| Lack of Skill                     | 3.36                     | 1.24 | 639  |  | 3.18                              | 1.29 | 585  |  | 3.05                        | 1.27 | 556  |  | 2.85                               | 1.32 | 393  |  | 3.27                    | 1.33 | 746  |  | 3.17    |

17

19

[illegible]<sup>a</sup> All deviations were assigned on Table 17.

•• p < .001

100

These problems are presented in the upper half of each cell, (see the next diagram)

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**Note:** Male correlations are presented in the upper diagonal of each cell; female correlations in the lower diagonal

46. 94,001

Table 14. Means and Standard Deviations for Gain Ratings.

|     | $\bar{X}$ | S. D. | Response |
|-----|-----------|-------|----------|
| GIS | 3.56      | 1.17  | 12009    |
| GIE | 3.33      | 1.21  | 11053    |
| RSC | 3.26      | 1.28  | 11242    |
| RCO | 3.11      | 1.28  | 8073     |
| RLS | 2.61      | 1.31  | 8734     |

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